

DRAKE UNIVERSITY

DES MOINES, IOWA 50311

Department of History

March 4, 1978

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Route 12
Old Receiver Rd.
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for the prompt shipment of the books I ordered. They arrived in excellent condition. I will zerox OINO in the next few days and return the book and a zerox copy as soon as possible.

From my questions you inferred that I go in for "wild theorizing" in my JFK Assassination course. The inference was justified by my queries, but I wish to assure you that my presentation to my students (over 350 in three years) carefully avoids such "wild theorizing." I've designed the course to focus upon the historical development of the controversy since that is my academic interest in the subject. I've been in correspondence with David Wrone at Stevens Point and hope to chat with him at the annual convention of the Organization of American Historians next month in New York City. Thanks for the name of Gerald McKnight at Hood College. I intend to contact him soon.

My question about the Richard Lester bullet is based upon a news report in the Des Moines Register on January 6, 1977. The report came from a copyrighted story by Jeremiah O'Leary in the Washington Star. Following is the relevant part:

The FBI said Wednesday that it needs the test bullets from Oswald's rifle to make comparisons with the new bullet that was found by a Dallas man in November, 1974, but was not disclosed by him until last month.

Richard Lester of Dallas Wednesday said he found the mangled bullet with the aid of a metal detector in the ground about 61 steps from the Texas School Book Depository --the building from which Oswald was accused of firing the shots that killed Kennedy. Asked why he did not come forward until now, Lester said: "Because it was on railroad property and I didn't want them to get it from me. But when I

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heard the investigation was being reopened I decided to make it known."

Lester's first disclosure about the bullet was made on a talk show on Dallas radio station KRLD on Nov. 22, 1976. The discovery was then published by the Times-Herald and it was then that Lester went to the Dallas FBI office with the bullet.

Sources said the bullet is so badly mangled that it is not possible to determine the caliber. The FBI laboratory has made exhaustive examinations of the Lester bullet and now is in the position where it cannot determine whether it is pertinent to the Kennedy case without making physical comparison to the Oswald bullets in custody of the National Archives.

Lester--a semiretired security guard in Dallas--said he discovered the bullet near the spot where Kennedy was shot by going to the railroad overpass and walking over the ground toward the building from which Oswald fired the shots on a line of sight. He said his detector indicated metal in the ground about 61 steps in front of and to the left of the book building. The bullet was buried in about three inches of earth and appeared to have been mashed as if it had glanced off something.

Since O'Neill has refused to give the FBI the original bullets and Sprague is protesting the request, the FBI is now expected to place the custody controversy before the attorney general for resolution.

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Since reading that report I've seen no other reference to the outcome of ^{the} dispute associated with FBI efforts to compare the Lester bullet with the bullets in the National Archives. -

Professor Wrone was kind enough to send me a copy of his "The Tools of the Historian and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy, The Evidentiary Base: A Critical Evaluation of the Basic Findings of 200 Investigators over the Last 14 Years." I fully agree with his assertion that you have "a magisterial command of the documentary base" and have made an "enormous contribution." And I agree with you and Wrone about the value of Roffman's Presumed Guilty.

I learned the other day that David Belin (who last year spoke to my class and of course defended himself, particularly with regard to the Givens testimony) will present the Commencement Address to Roosevelt High School here in DSM.

Wishing to you success in your continuing efforts on behalf of the American people, I remain

Sincerely Yours,



Charles A. Nelson